

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 02482 311304Z

47

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 928

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINT CZ

SUBJECT: HUSAK WARNS THAT STABLE PRICES REQUIRE INCREASED
PRODUCTIVITY

1. IN MAJOR SPEECH AT HARVEST CELEBRATION IN NITRA, SLOVAKIA
ATTENDED BY OTHER CPCs PRESIDUM MEMBERS AND VISITING DIGNITARIES
FROM OTHER CEMA COUNTRIES, PRESIDENT HUSAK GAVE PRIMARY
ATTENTION TO DOMESTIC QUESTIONS OF HARVEST, RUMORS OF FOOD
SHORTAGES AND PRICE POLICY. ON INTERNATIONAL SIDE HE
REPEATED FAMILIAR THEMES OF IMPORTANCE TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA OF
ALLIANCE WITH USSR OF SUPPORT FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, AND OF
DEEPENING CRISIS IN CAPITALIST WEST.
HE COMPLAINED OF INCREASING ATTACKS ON USSR, CSSR AND OTHER
SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND OF USE OF QUOTE DESERTERS (AND) LONG-
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FORGOTTEN EMIGRES UNQUOTE -- A CLEAR ALLUSION TO DEFECTORS

FROLIK AND AUGUST -- TO BLACKEN SOCIALISM, BUT ATTRIBUTED THESE ATTACKS TO PRESSURES OF PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGNS IN U.S. AND FRG. ON INTERNAL SIDE, HUSAK SOUGHT TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR 15TH PARTY CONGRESS PROGRAM AND UPCOMING FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

2. SPEECH WAS MAINLY NOTABLE IN THAT HUSAK SO SPECIFICALLY TIED CONTINUED STABLE PRICES FOR BASIC COMMODITIES TO IMPROVED LABOR PRODUCTIVITY. CITING THE 15TH PARTY CONGRESS PLEDGE ON STABLE RETAIL PRICES, HE SAID THAT CZECHOSLOVAK AUTHORITIES WANT TO MAINTAIN THE PLEDGE BUT CAN DO SO ONLY IF WORKERS IN ALL BRANCHES OF PRODUCTION KEEP IMPROVING THEIR WORK, RAISING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AND COMBATTING SHORTCOMINGS AS CALLED FOR IN THE SIXTH FYP. RISING PRICES OF IMPORTED RAW MATERIALS AND FOODS ARE BEING OFFSET BY "JMITIVE MEASURES" (SUBSIDIES), BUT CONSTANTLY IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY IS NECESSARY FOR THIS TO CONTINUE. "IF WE WANT TO LIVE WELL, WE HAVE TO WORK WELL," HUSAK SAID.

3. COMMENT: HUSAK SPOKE WITH CONSIDERABLE CANDOR ABOUT CERTAIN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS (AGRICULTURAL SHORTFALLS, DISTRIBUTION BOTTLENECKS, THE THREAT OF CONSUMER HOARDING) WHILE ALSO EXTOLLING HIGH LIVING AND DIETARY STANDARDS CZECHOSLOVAKS ENJOY AND STRESSING NEED TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM SELF-RELIANCE IN FOOD. SINCE 1969, REGIME HAS STRUCK TACIT BARGAIN WITH POPULACE THAT THEY WILL REMAIN WELL-FED AS LONG AS THEY REMAIN DOCILE. NOW THAT HIS POLITICAL POSITION IS STRONGER AND THE COST OF SUBSIDIZED FOOD PRICES FAR HIGHER, HUSAK IS EMBOLDENED TO SAY THAT HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY AS WELL AS DOCILITY IS THE SID FOR THE QUO OF CONTINUED LOW FOOD PRICES.

BYRNE

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